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If Christ Be Not Risen - What Then? - Part 1

Introduction

As I write this it is Saturday, April 20th 2019, yesterday was called “Good Friday” and tomorrow April 21st will be Easter Sunday. These are terms the Scriptures of truth know nothing about for God never builds any doctrine on the day our Lord was crucified, but the Holy Spirit makes emphatic mention of the day He rose from the dead and its blessed results. There is only one verse in all the scriptures which informs us of what day it was, and that is, “Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week” (Mk. 16:9). Of course there will always be skeptics and those who reject this truth. Their question is, “Prove Jesus rose from the dead”. No doubt many prefer not to believe He rose for if (used argumentatively) Christ did rise, it has uncomfortable ramifications for them.

One of the foremost points in such an argument is the fact that beliefs are based on facts. For instance, we expect flowers to bloom in the Spring. We believe that will happen due to the fact that it happens every year. That is a fact. A time of light (day) follows every period of darkness called night. These are facts which we can believe. Therefore, if a person believes that Christ never rose from the dead and there was no resurrection, then what are the facts they are basing their belief on?

The first observation:

The Holy Spirit indissolubly unites the death and resurrection of the Lord.

There are matters which God puts great emphasis on, sometimes by using a word in triplicate, such as the word “Holy” when referring to God (Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8); sometimes by using a negative as when emphasizing the perfection of the offerings (Ex. 12:5; Lev. 1:10); and sometimes by repeating various truths built on the same foundation. This is the way the vitalness of the death and resurrection of the Lord are emphasized in the scriptures.

- a) The crucified Lord died so as to rise (Jn. 10:17), and the risen One lives forever as the crucified One (1 Cor. 2:2; Rev. 5:6).
- b) Both are necessary for the unveiling of the power and love of the Father. “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again” (Jn. 10:17; Eph. 1:19-21).
- c) Both are necessary for the message of the gospel to be complete (1 Cor. 15:3-4).
- d) Both are necessary for the reconciliation of humanity. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Rom. 5:10).
- e) Both are necessary for the model and power of the believer. “For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God” (Rom. 6:10-11).
- f) Both are necessary for the functioning of His Heavenly priesthood. “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Rom. 8:34).
- g) Both are necessary for the unilateral Lordship of Christ. “For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living” (Rom. 14:9).

Those who argue that the resurrection never happened?

In such a situation it does not matter what others believe whither it is incarnation, die like a dog, etc. Where is the evidence for their beliefs? I could be foolish enough to proclaim that the sun and moon are optical illusions and there is no such places as such. Reality is, I could declare it all I want but it is not based on facts. The fact is the sun and moon are real material objects. However, we must consider a “what if” question:

What if the Lord is not raised from the dead?

The individual who does not believe in the Lord’s resurrection has to present evidence to prove all that the resurrection of the Lord entails is man made foolishness. Let them present the facts that the Lord did not rise from the dead. Such an individual must:

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- a) Prove that all the purposes of God are nullified. A matter impossible to do for the purposes of God can never be nullified (Eph. 1:5-6, 9, 11) for, "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him" (Eccl. 3:14). Prove they can checkmate the Almighty.
- b) Prove that the end of the only perfect life ever lived which was well pleasing to God ultimately became as any other entombed body, a collection of dust in an ancient tomb. The unbeliever must prove the tomb was never vacated, and the end of a life well pleasing to God was to die as a criminal, a body of corruption ending being a handful of dust.
- c) Prove that all the "resurrection types of the Old Testament are nothing more than empty religious rituals". One of the Old Testament types of the death and resurrection of the Lord was the offering using two birds when one bird was killed and the other let go free (Lev. 14:4-7). The bird was the only offering which incorporates the truth of the incarnation and ascension of the Lord for the bird left its natural habitat and came down to where man lived. After the death of the Lord, the other bird indicates His resurrection by ascending back to its natural habitat. To this could be added the waving of the Sheaf of Firstfruits for Christ is risen from the dead and become the Firstfruits (Lev. 23:20; 1 Cor 15:20), Aaron's rod which budded and a number of others. An unbeliever would need to be able to prove that God never gave such instructions and they were nothing more than useless meaningless human rituals.
- d) Prove that all the prophecies concerning the Lord's resurrection have never yet been fulfilled and are nothing more than imaginative fantasies. Prophecies such as, "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Psa. 16:10); "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. 53:10-12). The unbeliever must prove that these two prophecies and all other written prophecies are futile imaginations.
- e) When Paul wrote to the Romans he based the truth of justification on the resurrection of the Lord. "But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:24, 25). If this is a myth then all are under eternal condemnation, without any hope for eternity.
- f) The Lord spent some 33 years learning by experience the path of obedience (Heb. 5:8) and God informs us that, "Being made perfect, He (Christ) became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9). The Lord learnt by experience what it was to be tempted, hungry, suffer, enter death, etc. If Christ be not raised then all the experiences of the 33 years of His earthly sojourn were for no purpose. This would indicate a sad God who would cause His Son to have the hardest of life's experiences being a man of sorrows (Isa. 53:2) for absolutely no reason.
- g) Prove that Christ was a liar and a con man who said multiple times he would raise from the dead and do so after three days (Matt. 20:19; Mk 8:31, 10:34; Lk. 18:33 24:7; Jn. 20:9); and others accepted what he said as being a possible truth (Matt. 27:63). If the Lord told a single lie or led people into a false line of thinking He would have been a deceiver. Had He been such the sufferings on the cross were no more but indeed less effective than any of the blood sacrifices of the Old Testament, then the individual must prove that the sacrifice of the animals was superior to that of Christ's.

To be continued

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